

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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SBC to meet in Indianapolis June 15-16

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP and local reports) — Southern Baptists will gather in Indianapolis June 15-16, continuing their Empowering Kingdom Growth initiative by focusing on the theme, Kingdom Forever.

The theme, drawn from Matthew 6:13 — "For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever" — is the second consecutive year in which the theme has centered on the EKG (Empowering Kingdom Growth) initiative, which began in 2002. The initiative asks all Southern Baptists to examine if they are Kingdom-focused.

The annual meeting will feature Kingdom Challenge sermons by such speakers as David Jeremiah and Franklin Graham, singing by the Gaither Vocal Band, and will coincide with the release of EKG: The Heartbeat of God, written by EKG national strategist Kenneth Hemphill. The book traces the history of God's Kingdom from biblical days through today.

No Mississippi Baptists are listed on the annual meeting's program.

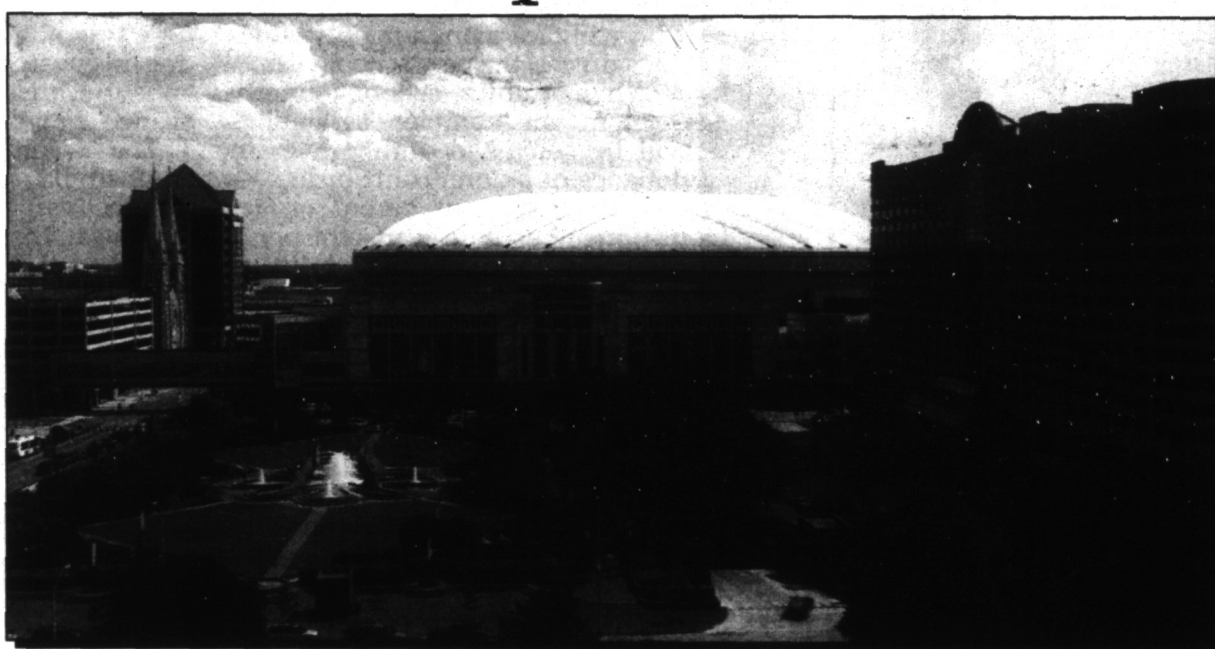
Some significant business matters will be presented to messengers, including:

- **The Baptist World Alliance (BWA).** Messengers are scheduled to vote on a recommendation adopted by the SBC Executive Committee to withdraw from the Baptist World Alliance. The Executive Committee, as well as a study committee on SBC/BWA relations, has cited various theological concerns with the BWA, which has responded that its highest mission continues to be to bring the lost to salvation in Jesus Christ alone.

- **Sole membership.** A motion pertaining to New Orleans Seminary and sole membership may be considered. The seminary remains the only SBC entity not to adopt the corporate model of sole membership, which would clarify that the SBC owns the seminary.

Among seminary trustee's concerns are the implications to the concept of sole membership presented by Louisiana's Napoleonic law system, the only one of its kind in the country. Recently seminary trustees voted to present two alternatives to messengers in 2005 instead of adopting the recommendation of the Executive Committee to name the convention as sole member of the seminary's corporation.

- **Annuity Board name change.** Messengers will consider a proposal to



Indianapolis Convention Center and RCA Dome

change the Annuity Board's name and expand its ministry opportunities. It has been approved by the Executive Committee. The entity's name would change to GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, and it would be permitted to serve evangelical ministry organizations outside the SBC.

Jack Graham, pastor of Prestonwood Church, Dallas, will preside over his final convention, having served his second one-year term. He will deliver his president's address at approximately 11:10 a.m. on Tuesday, June 15. That afternoon, around 2:30, messengers will elect a new president. Bobby Welch, pastor of First Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., is presently the only announced nominee to succeed Graham.

Following a pattern begun last year, this year's convention will feature Kingdom Challenge sermons by prominent national and Southern Baptist leaders.

David Jeremiah, senior pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church in California, will speak at 3:13 p.m. Tuesday, while Jay Strack, president of Student Leadership University in Florida, will speak at 8:38 that night.

Roy J. Fish, evangelism professor at Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, will deliver the third Kingdom Challenge message at 10:09 a.m. Wednesday, with Franklin Graham capping the night at 8:53 p.m.

The Tuesday night session features a message by Strack, followed by the North American Mission Board report (9:08 p.m.)

Wednesday night's schedule includes the International Mission Board report (7:53 p.m.), the Gaither Vocal Band (8:23 p.m.), and Franklin Graham.

Steve Gaines, pastor of First Church in Gardendale, Ala., will deliver the convention message at 11:29 a.m. Wednesday.

The Executive Committee will deliver a report at 9:55 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. Tuesday. Part of its report will be the de-funding of the Baptist World Alliance.

LifeWay Christian Resources will present its report at 3:33 p.m. Tuesday, followed by the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission at 6:49 p.m. that night. The Annuity Board will present its report at 11:04 a.m. Wednesday.

The Woman's Missionary Union report will take place at 2:14 p.m. Tuesday.

All six Southern Baptist seminaries will present a separate report, with three taking place each day. On Tuesday messengers will hear reports from Golden Gate Seminary in Mill Valley, Ca. (2:48 p.m.), Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth (4:22 p.m.), and New Orleans Seminary (8:08 p.m.). Wednesday's reports will include Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky. (9:44 a.m.), Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. (10:29 a.m.) and Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C. (6:15 p.m.).

The week prior to the convention, hundreds of Southern Baptists will come together for Crossover Indiana, an evangelism-focused strategy that uses block parties, door-to-door visits and other efforts to spread the Gospel in and around Indianapolis. In addition, in an effort to plug new believers into churches, harvest revival services will be held June 10-12 in churches across the region.

The annual SBC Pastors' Conference and Woman's Missionary Union meeting will be held June 13-14. Paige Patterson, Adrian Rogers and Stephen Olford are among the speakers at this year's Pastors' Conference, which will focus on the theme, Jesus Came Preaching. WMU's theme is Christ Followers.

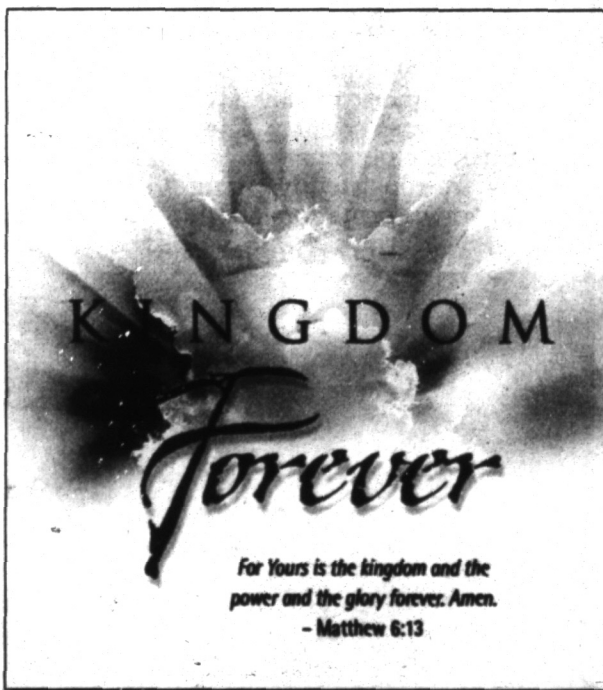
WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

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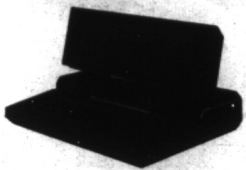
Just for the Record

Sunday School Lessons

Baptist Children's Village



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Not in Mississippi

It may be just the beginning of summer vacation, but in a few short weeks public schools all across Mississippi will be left intentionally unlocked. The schools will be left intentionally unlocked so that Christian teachers, administrators, and parents can prayer walk through every room and ask God to bless their efforts in the upcoming school year.

These brave Christians, who in our enlightened culture will be risking professional, legal, and societal sanctions for bringing God into the schools, will pray for every student, teacher, and administrator.

They will pray for the salvation of the lost ones, and for strength for their faithful brothers and sisters who will face many ungodly situations during the new school year.

When public schools finally open in late summer, assemblies will be convened with prayer in defiance of federal court orders — and nary a student, parent, or faculty member will even whisper a complaint to authorities. Spiritual matters will be cleverly woven into class times, and creationism will be discussed alongside evolution.

Why would Christian professional educators, many of whom are Baptists who sit in the pews beside us each week in church, risk all to do these things? Because they believe they are having an impact through their witness in the public school system of Mississippi. They believe God has called them to make a difference in the lives of co-workers and students who would otherwise never hear the Gospel message. They believe they are called of God to do what they do.

If a pair of short-sighted Southern Baptists have their way, however, that

light in an exceedingly dark corner of our world will be permanently extinguished. T.C. Pinckney, a retired U.S. Air Force brigadier general from Virginia, and Bruce N. Shortt, a Texas attorney, have submitted a proposed resolution to be considered at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Indianapolis in a couple of weeks that calls on Southern Baptists to withdraw their children from the "Godless, anti-Christian education" they are receiving in the public school systems of this country.

"...(T)he millions of children in government schools spend 7 hours a day, 180 days a year being taught that God is irrelevant to every area of life..." according to the proposed resolution. "... (M)any Christian children in government schools are converted to an anti-Christian worldview rather than evangelizing their schoolmates..."

The resolution ends by calling on Southern Baptist officers, members, and the churches associated with the convention to remove all their children from government schools and "see to it that they receive a thoroughly Christian education..."

What a slap in the face of Christian educators everywhere, who endure threats and pressure that people like Pinckney and Shortt cannot imagine, all so they can provide a much-needed witness as God leads.

Hopefully, this intellectual disgrace will not be recommended to messengers by the SBC Resolutions Committee.

Maybe then Pinckney, one of the most divisive figures in Virginia Baptist life, and Shortt, who is Texas state director for the national anti-public school group Exodus Mandate, will do a little research before they brand everyone and everything associated with public schools as "Godless."

The public school system in Mississippi

may have its problems, but the last thing we need in this state — or any other state — is a mass departure of devout Christians. Apparently, Pinckney, Shortt, and their ilk are willing to subjugate the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to the achievement of political goals.

The alternatives to public schools offered by Pinckney and Shortt — home schooling and Christian schools — are worthy of discussion and, in a perfect world, ideal alternatives. Many Mississippi Baptists are already involved in home schooling or Christian schooling, and are pleased with the results. More power to them.

As long as public schools exist, however, there will be a need for a Christian witness in those schools. As demonstrably effective as are home schooling and Christian schooling, not everyone will be able to fit into those environments for a number of reasons.

Are we not commanded to tell public school children, too, of the eternal salvation offered through Jesus Christ alone? Are we now to turn our backs and leave these children to be devoured by the evil one?

Not in Mississippi, we won't, and not among Mississippi Baptists for sure. As we have proven for over 100 years, Mississippi Baptists are willing to go anywhere, at any cost, for however long it takes, with all the strength we can muster, to bring lost souls to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. That includes the public school system.

The Pinckneys and Shortts of this world, with their narrow, exclusivist view of Christianity, don't seem to understand that.

Perhaps Mississippi Baptists — and Southern Baptists in other states who believe as we do — can make it unmistakably clear to them in a couple of weeks.

GUEST OPINION:

The bravery I see, every day

By Shane Dillman, U.S. Navy Chaplain

represent everything that is good about America. They have pride in self and country. They do not ask for personal favors, but they are consistently trying to find out information about their fellow Marines.

It is very difficult to see people hurting both emotionally and physically. I am privileged to show them God's love and have the opportunity to pray with them and many times share tears with them. The entire staff of



HONOR TO SERVE — U.S. Navy Chaplain Shane Dillman (left), shown praying with an unidentified Marine at National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., reaches out daily to wounded U.S. Marines and their families in their time of greatest need. (BP photo Deborah A. Dyer)

Corpsmen, nurses, and doctors who take care of these Marines do so with great proficiency and expertise — but also love.

The image that stands out the most in my memory occurred while I was walking down the passageway to my office and heard a voice behind me. I instantly recognized the voice of a young Marine who had lost his left leg in combat. As I turned my head, I was astounded to see him walking toward me. He told me that he wanted to come up and thank me for all of the prayers, calling cards, and the time we had spent talking. He told me that the new prosthetic was really working out well and that he would be able to carry on.

Whether someone agrees or disagrees with the war in Iraq is inconsequential, but what really matters is the bravery of these young men and women. They are willing to answer the same call that so many before them have heard. With much the same courage their ancestors displayed when they raised the flag at Iwo Jima, these young Americans have raised our flag throughout Iraq. They have given people who have never known freedom the chance to be free. They protect the innocent and care for the fallen.

They also have allowed this Navy chaplain the highest honor of being able to say, "I prayed with a Marine today."

Sudan peace accord promising, troubling

NAIVASHA, Kenya (BP) — Sudan's government and a major rebel group have signed a peace agreement that could lead to the end of that country's 21 years of civil war — although a region of the country facing alleged ethnic cleansing has been left out of the accord.

The agreement between the Arab-dominated Muslim government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army in southern Sudan does not encompass rebels in the country's western region of Darfur. Darfur could become "the biggest humanitarian drama of our time," the U.N. director for relief in Sudan told *The New York Times*.

A charge of ethnic cleansing has been leveled at the Sudanese government by Human Rights Watch, which stated that Arab militias known as "janjaweed," have been "armed, trained and uniformed by the Sudanese government." The militias pose the threat of genocide against black tribes in Darfur that could rival or surpass the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that claimed 500,000 lives, according to the human rights organization in an Associated Press report.

The number of people needing immediate humanitarian aid as a result of warfare in Darfur has risen from 1.2 million to two million in recent weeks, and the issue is compounded by the arrival of the rainy season, which makes getting relief to those who need it even more difficult.

The peace agreement reached May 26 in Naivasha, Kenya, followed 100 days of

negotiations in the most recent round of talks between the government and the Sudanese People's Liberation Army.

The two sides signed three protocols on power-sharing and administering three dis-

according to *The Times*. The two groups plan to meet again in June or July to clarify details.

The civil war of mostly religious nature has plagued the largest country in Africa for two decades and claimed more than two million lives. The Arab-dominated government has waged what has been largely described as a genocidal campaign against the mostly black Christian and animist south.

Slave raids and the bombardment of hospitals, churches, schools, and relief stations have been part of the government's campaign, along with the rape of women and children, forcible conversion to Islam of children and starvation for Sudanese who refuse to convert.

"We commend both sides for their commitment to peace and urge them to move quickly to work out details of a formal cease-fire and related security arrangements, as well as the means for implementing the agreements signed today," U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said May 26.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said he "welcomes this development and believes it is a major step forward" in the peace process, according to CNN.com.

Carl Moeller, USA president of Open Doors, a Christian organization concerned with assisting persecuted Christians, called the peace agreement an answer to the prayers of many.

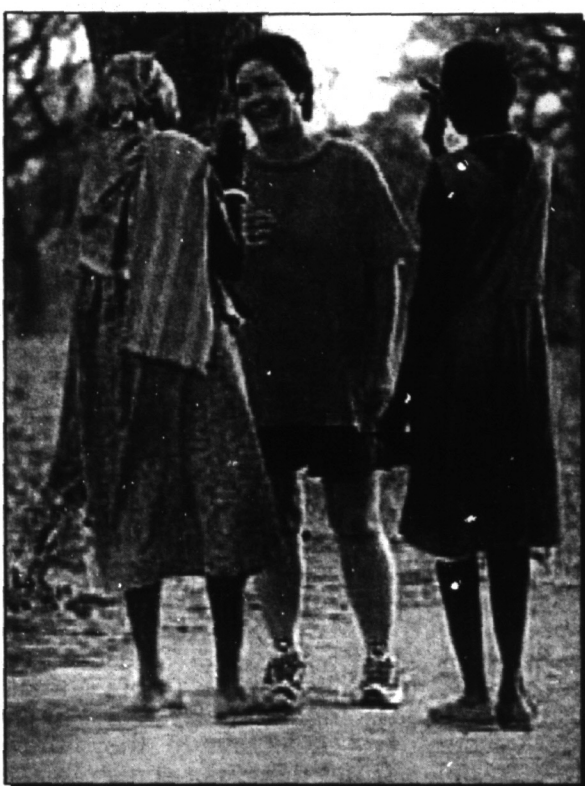
"This is truly an answer to the fervent and frequent prayers of millions of Christians around the globe," he said. "Southern Sudan has deservedly earned a reputation of one of the most hostile places on earth for Christians. We need to continue to pray that the final details of the agreement will be put into place and a permanent peace will finally be realized."

Annan called on the Sudanese government and rebels in Darfur to "seize the

momentum created in Naivasha to reach a political solution in western Sudan, putting an end to the grave humanitarian and human rights situations there."

The White House released a statement about Sudan May 27, saying the peace agreement "presents a unique opportunity for a united Sudan to cast aside the baggage of its troubled past and embark on a new course of stability, prosperity and reconciliation."

The statement also said the United States urges the government of Sudan to "use the positive momentum created by the peace agreement to reverse the tragic human rights and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Darfur. Further action is required in order for the benefits of peace to reach all Sudanese and for Sudan to



SUDAN WITNESS — Debbie Marshall (center), an International Mission Board medial missionary associate in southern Sudan, talks with a pair of Sudanese women she encountered on a roadway in that African country. Human rights and other groups have expressed concern over the portions of the civil war-torn country that were left out of the accord. (BP photo)

puted areas of the country, according to CNN.com. The accord provides for political power-sharing, a split in oil revenues, the maintenance of separate armies with integrated forces deployed in strategic areas and a future referendum allowing Sudanese southerners to decide whether to remain part of the country or secede,



THE
SECOND
FRONT PAGE

Record

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enjoy full cooperation with the international community. The displaced population in Darfur must be able to safely return to their homes so that they can contribute to the rebuilding of their country."

The United States has limited diplomatic relations with Sudan and maintains economic sanctions because of its continued listing by the State Department as a state sponsor of terrorism. Though the country was home to Osama bin Laden in the early 1990s, U.S. officials have credited Sudan with increased anti-terrorism cooperation since 2001.

Franklin Graham met with Sudanese President Umar Al-Bashir at the presidential palace in Khartoum Dec. 8 to discuss religious freedom and the implementation of peace in Sudan.

The president gave Graham permission to distribute 60,000 Christmas gift boxes to the children of Sudan and to speak for 30 minutes on national television on the subject of peace.

S.F. case in court

SAN FRANCISCO (BP) — Lawyers asked the California Supreme Court May 25 to invalidate the 4,000 marriage licenses the city of San Francisco issued to same-sex couples. The court heard oral arguments in two cases that will decide if San Francisco officials had the authority to marry same-sex couples in violation of state law. The court subsequently issued a restraining order against the city. "They simply have no authority," Timothy Muscat, associate attorney general for the state of California, told the seven justices. Associate Justice Ming Chin raised a hypothetical question: What if the state legalized same-sex marriage? "Would the mayors throughout the state be free to disregard [the law]?" he asked. "There is no such law, and I don't anticipate there will be," Therese Stewart, associate attorney for the city, responded. Muscat and Jordan Lorence, an attorney for the Alliance Defense Fund, argued that the licenses must be invalidated. Stewart, though, said that tossing out the licenses would be sending the wrong message. "If the court invalidates the licenses now," Stewart said, "what it will be doing is signaling to the world and signaling to the couples involved that their rights to have their relationships recognized are not considered weighty enough by this court to outweigh such considerations as inconvenience and confusion." Associate Justice Marvin Baxter then retorted: "But, of course, it's the city that created this mess. And I still haven't heard an adequate explanation as to why the city did not get a judicial determination of the correctness of its position before putting all these people in the precarious position they are now in." The two cases are *Lockyer v. City and County of San Francisco* and *Lewis v. Alfaro*. A decision is expected within 90 days.

Looking back

10 years ago

Officials from two accrediting agencies visit Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, to determine what response they will make to the trustee firing of seminary president Russell Dilday. Many observers on the campus expect the accrediting agencies to put Southwestern on probation.

20 years ago

After almost 33 years at the downtown location, Woman's Missionary Union headquarters relocates its national headquarters to a new site in Birmingham, Ala. This marks the eighth move for the Southern Baptist auxiliary in its near 100-year history.

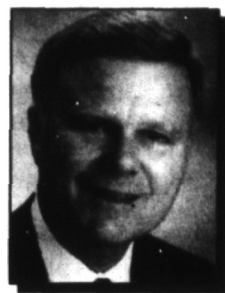
50 years ago

"To the chagrin of many and the surprise of more," the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in St. Louis, votes to accept the recent Supreme Court decision on segregation. "These or any other resolutions on this question had no place in the Southern Baptist Convention," wrote Editor A.L. Goodrich in *The Baptist Record*.

WEAKNESSES

Hardly a week goes by that I do not receive a call, and sometimes it seems like one every day, from a Pastor Search Committee wanting to get information about a prospective candidate for their church. It is not easy serving on a search committee and finding, processing, and filtering the information that you get, to see a true picture of the person you are considering. For decades I have been receiving calls like this related to people with whom I have worked or have known through the years. I have tried to answer fully and forthrightly in an understandable manner. Often, the committee asks me for information I do not have, nor does anyone else possess. At other times clear, straightforward information for good or bad is given and it is not accepted. Still, I am convinced that placing the decision-making process of who to call as pastor in the hands of local, congregationally-elected people to search out and find a shepherd is the best way the mission can be accomplished.

Throughout most of the years I have been receiving these calls, one of the inevitable questions asked is, "What are his weaknesses or what is his greatest weakness?" Longtime Mississippi Baptist pastor Gene Dobbs told about a fellow who, when asked about a man's strengths and weaknesses, would reply something to the effect, "Well, his strength is deer hunting and his weakness is fishing." I do not think that is what the committee is really asking.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

While I do not question whether or not it is valid to ask about strengths or weaknesses, I do wonder if the answers are valid. Many years ago I stopped giving just a simple answer in regard to a person's weaknesses because I realized it was wrong. Let me explain. To begin with, there is the problem that is created in the minds of folks who hear the response. It will become their primary focus of attention to watch for those weaknesses to appear. I suppose it is human nature for people to zero in on such things and with every occurrence it is reaffirmed in their minds that the individual is weak in that area. In fact, I have even noticed as people have watched for such weaknesses that they lose all sight of the person's strengths. There is no acknowledgement of or appreciation for the positive things that may vastly overshadow the weaknesses. They keep watching for the weaknesses until they see nothing else but failures.

Here is the bigger issue: Oftentimes when I am asked about a person's weaknesses it is difficult for me to come up with one, two, or three because many of the people I know who

are serving the Lord, as they discover they have a weakness, begin to work on it to the point that it becomes a strength. I have seen that repeatedly in people's lives through the years. People who are conscientious, driven, passionate about serving the Lord, and being the best they can be have oftentimes turned weaknesses into strengths. For instance, I have seen people who were not good administrators study, attend conferences, pick up ideas, and implement processes to the point where they become excellent in that area. I have watched people who did not particularly have glowing personalities and excellent relational skills push themselves to be more open, outgoing, friendly, connected, and available to the people around them. For some this is not an easy thing to do.

One last thought which I think is vital to committees, pastors, and churches concerning weaknesses and strengths: It is wrong of us to expect people to be able to do what God has not gifted them to do. Sometimes it is spiritually shortsighted on the part of those involved to expect or demand that a pastor begin to do what he cannot do.

According to Scripture, there is a spiritual gift of teaching, preaching, pastoring, administering, and guiding. If that be true, what a pastor does in the local church setting is generally focused in the direction of his giftedness. If you feel led to go and demand of your pastor that he preach as good as the fellow in the adjoining church field or with the excellence of the fellow you watch on television, you may be saying a great deal about your own lack of understanding of what the Scripture teaches.

I certainly am aware that preachers can fail to apply themselves in their study habits and in their growing posture, but there are times and there are things that just cannot be accomplished. I played basketball when I was in school, but when you are 5'10" and built like I was, it was impossible to dunk a ball. I wanted to and I even saw other people who were my size do it. I tried hard, but it never happened and it never will happen.

What is a better thing for us to do than scratch around for weaknesses? Maybe it would be better if we focused on the strengths and asked God to make the weaknesses manageable or at least tolerable so that He could take all of us and magnify the giftedness He has provided in us and through us to His glory. We could see Him at work, rejoice with each other, and thank Him for the gifts that He has planted in each of us.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.



YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him.
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

New Sunday School lesson writers begin this week

A pair of prominent Mississippi Baptists will serve for the next quarter as Sunday School writers for The Baptist Record.

Morris (Mo) Baker, writer for the Explore the Bible lessons, is Baptist Student Union (BSU) director at the University of Mississippi in Oxford. He holds the M.Div. degree from New Orleans Seminary and the Ed.D. from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky.. An Alabama native, Baker has served as



Baker

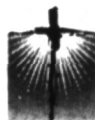
minister to students at First Church, Gulfport; and BSU director at Pearl River Community College in Poplarville.

Mary Carraway, writer for the Family Bible Study lessons, is a retired high school English teacher and wife of Clyde Carraway, minister of edu-



Carraway

cation and senior adults at First Church, Wiggins. She is a graduate of Millsaps College in Jackson and has taught Sunday School "for as many years as I can remember." She has written for Home Life and Living With Teenagers, publications of LifeWay Christian Resources,



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

Special Ministry Retreat September 10-11, 2004 • Camp Garaywa

The Sunday School Department is planning a retreat for Exceptional persons (12 yrs. and older), their pastors/ministers, parents, teachers/friends. We are looking for churches that have a class for special needs adults. Please let us know if your church is interested in participating in this retreat by June 15, 2004.

The theme for the retreat is "Rickshaw Rally Racing to the Son". There will be games, Bible study, singing, and lots of fun for all participants. Cost is \$35.00 per person.

For more information, please call Linda Reeves at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3294. You may email at jellis@mbcb.org.

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What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

June 3, 2004

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

WMU Church Leadership Training

Theme: Christ Followers

August 20-21, 2004 Camp Garaywa, Clinton

Special Guests

Amanda Able, worship leader

Amanda grew up in GAs and this summer will be her fourth as a GA/Acteens camp staffer. Gifted in sign language, drama, art and music, when she is not working at Camp Garaywa, she works with the youth and children at First Baptist Church, Wiggins, where her father is pastor.

Alpha Goombi, Native American and North American Mission Board worker in Nebraska

Alpha will share her marvelous story of God's leadership in her life to bring her and her husband to their work at the Omaha Baptist Center, where they minister to people from all over the world, including Sudanese, Koreans and Japanese, as well as their beloved Native Americans.

Rhonda Reeves, National WMU preschool design editor

Rhonda is the author of Growing on the Go and 200+ Ways to Care for Preschoolers. She has been writing for preschoolers, teachers and parents for more than 30 years, with nine books and hundreds of articles to her credit. She and her family live in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Conferences

All new leaders, all experienced leaders, and all members of each WMU organization will find conferences for help needed in their leadership and in membership participation. There will be conferences in Spanish.

More than 50 conferences are scheduled. In addition to age-level leadership training, some of the conferences are: She Walked with Jesus: Stories of Christ Followers in the Bible, Leading Muslim Women into the Light of Christ, The Life That Prays, 200+ Basic Faith Activities for Preschoolers, God's Power for African American Women, Ideas for Creating a Dynamic Missions Setting, Bible Story Telling, The Importance of Cross-Cultural Understanding, Breaking the Cycle of Poverty. There will also be conferences for helping age-level organizations to become more active in doing missions.

It's for Everyone!

A place is prepared for everyone who wishes to attend and enjoy an array of conferences, ideas swap shop, a 125th anniversary celebration, and spiritual growth opportunities.

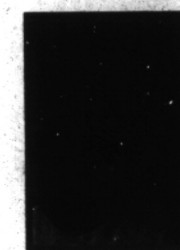
For information or registration form, please contact
Tammy Anderson at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 323, or
tanderson@mbcb.org. or check our Web site at www.mbc.org.

SuperSummer

MISSISSIPPI
July 12-16, 2004

featuring

What is Super Summer?



Fred D. Lynch
Worship Leader



Chris Davis
Music Leader

Super Summer is:

- twenty hours of discipleship/evangelism training
- a week of challenge for students to learn how to "penetrate their culture"
- creative, interactive and incredible
- a "don't miss" opportunity
- leadership ... envisioning how your choices and actions today may influence you tomorrow

Guidelines for all students

1. Demonstrates leadership qualities and is a growing Christian.
2. Faithful involvement in worship, Sunday School, and Wednesday night youth activities.
3. Complete at least one level of a discipleship study (i.e. DiscipleGroup, DiscipleNow...).
4. Memorized a minimum of 10 scripture verses relating to discipleship, evangelism, or a disciple study.
5. Share their personal testimony with the youth group.
6. Share the Gospel with at least one person this year.
7. Completed at least the 8th grade in 2004, but not yet in college.
8. Agree to attend all SS sessions.
9. Journal how you are growing in your walk with Christ (i.e. prayer, scripture memorization, struggles, joys, etc.).
10. First year students: you must be involved in a "small group" study or accountability group prior to Super Summer.
11. Second year students: express in 100 words or less your level of commitment to Christ and how you are involved in leadership in your church and community. Please give to your youth minister.

If you have any questions about these guidelines, please give us a call, and we will try to help you in any way that we can. Super Summer is an incredible experience, and we want to do all we can to keep that standard high. These guidelines help in many ways. Thanks for your attention to the details of these guidelines.

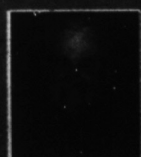
TO REQUEST A REGISTRATION PACKET

Call us at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 283, or E-mail us at redwards@mbcb.org

REALITY CHECK

Mississippi Baptist
Youth Night

featuring



Al McVernon, pastor
Wedgewood BC
Ft. Worth
Speaker



Al McVernon
Wedgewood BC
Ft. Worth
Speaker

Mississippi Coliseum, Jackson

July 23, 2004 • 6:30-9:00 p.m.

Sponsored by the Youth Ministry Team, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

2
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4

Growing Churches 2004

There is strength in
multiple strands!

"... A cord of three
strands is not easily
broken." Eccl. 4:12

"United in Ministry"



July 29-31
Gulfshore Baptist
Assembly
with
Jim Futral
executive director-treasurer
MBCB



August 6-7
Lake
Tiak O'Khata
with
Tommy Mitchell
AMD
Gulf Coast Baptist Association



Sponsored jointly by the
Discipleship and Family Ministry Department and
Sunday School Department


For more info on July 29-31, call 601-292-3373
For more info on August 6-7, call 601-292-3374



Gulfshore
Music Leadership Conference

Camp Pastor
Gary Richardson
Enjoying God in God-
Centered Biblical
Worship
Don Whitney
Conducting
Milfred Valentine
Small Church Resources
Jimmy McCaleb

Piano
Cindy Berry
Organ
Becky Lombard
Instrumental
David Young
Youth
Gloria Barnes
Handbells
Phillis Kirk & Jerry Talley

Preschool/Children
Darlene Abbott
Rhonda Edge Buescher
Kay Payton
Bill Barnes
Gloria Barnes
Barry Tweedy
Debbie Wren
 **Sharing**
the Song
of Jesus

To make reservations, please contact Gulfshore Baptist Assembly at 228-452-7261. For more info on program, call the Church Music Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 292-3267 in Jackson.

FAMILY WEEK

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly
Mon., July 5 – Thurs., July 8

"Kingdom Families: Making a Difference"

SPECIAL GUESTS:

- Brian Neal & Band, Monticello
- Tim Morrison, Monticello
Chalk Art/Music
- FBC, DeRidder, La., Puppets/Mime/Clowns

EVENTS:

- Ice Cream/Watermelon Fellowship
- Night Swimming
- Bar-b-que cookout
- Afternoons will be FREE

CONFERENCES:

PRESCHOOLER/CHILDREN

- TeamKID

TEENAGERS

- Mini Centrifuge
Craig Brown, Jackson
Colonial Heights BC, Jackson
Minister of Students

ADULT CONFERENCES

- Single Parenting
James Haynes, FBC, Biloxi
- Couples
Dwight and Kay Faulkenberry
Philadelphia (Pathway Ministries)
- "Love Languages of God"
Torn Prather, MBCB

Family Week Registration

IMPORTANT: A \$50 deposit per person/ \$100 per family is required to reserve a spot.
MAIL TO: Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, 100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571
(Visa/MasterCard are accepted.) For more information call 228-452-7261. Make checks payable to Gulfshore Baptist Assembly.

Name of Adults _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Children's names/birthdays _____

Church _____ Association _____

Amount Enclosed: \$ _____

(Note: No Skateboards or roller-blades)

"A" Unit

Adult: \$138.25 (1 or 2)

Youth: \$138.25 (12 yrs. – 12th grade)

Child: \$71.88 (2-11 yrs.)

"C" Unit

\$122.50 (4 or more)

\$76.00 (12 yrs. – 12th grade)

\$48.25 (2-11 yrs.)

Leaders

H.B. London, Jr. – vice president of Ministry Outreach/Pastoral Ministries for Focus on the Family

Lew King – minister of music at FBC, Byram

Child Care

Supervised care will be made available for preschoolers, children and youth.

Reservation and Registration

• Participation is unlimited, but the on-site housing is limited to the first hundred (100) couples who register for this retreat. This number is based on the available private accommodations at Gulfshore.

• Registration must be made with Gulfshore.

Cost

2 nights lodging and 6 meals:

• **Adults:** \$97.75 per person

• **Ages 12 & up:** \$56.55 per person

• **Ages 2-11:** \$33.28 per person

• **Age 2 and under:** no cost

There is no conference fee.

Gulfshore accepts VISA and MasterCard.

Pastor and Wife Retreat

Purpose

To provide a time of encouragement, inspiration and fellowship for pastors and wives.

July 15-17, 2004

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

For more info, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305.

REGISTRATION

Pastor & Wife Retreat – July 15-17, 2004, at Gulfshore

Name _____ Church _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Association _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

E-mail _____

Wife's name _____

Please indicate the type of accommodations needed:

___ Couple only ___ Couple with children (total in family – and ages of children _____)

Refunds: 61 days or more – all; 31 days to 60 days – one-half; 30 days or less – none. Cancellations must be received in writing or by fax at Gulfshore.

Please mail fax to: Frank Simmons, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Phone: 228-452-7261
100 First Street, Pass Christian, MS 39571, Fax: 228-452-7263
*Please include a \$50 deposit per person 2 years or older or \$100 per family.

SINGLES MISSIONS LAB

fellowship
...worship
celebrations...
...concert...

September 24-25, 2004
Camp Garaywa
Clinton, Miss.

...hands-on
ministry...
...testimonies
...and more!

Registrations must be postmarked by September 8, 2004. Refunds will not be available after that time, but substitutions may be made. For information or registration form, please contact Tammy Anderson at 1-800-748-1651, ext. 323, or tanderson@mbcb.org.



Regional Senior Adult Rallies

\$2 payable at the door
8:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Speaker: Scotty Shows

Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn.

Conferences:

• **Marriage in Senior Years:** Scotty Shows

• **Magic, Ministry & Comedy**

Professor CornPone

Joseph Harris, Laurel

• **Leadership:** Farley Earnest, Brandon

SOUTHERN

Monday, August 30

Covington-Jeff Davis Association Center, Collins

Lincoln Corale & FBC, Crystal Springs, Choir

For info call: 601-765-4689

CENTRAL

Tuesday, August 31

Alta Woods Baptist Church, Jackson

The Strummers, Parkway Baptist Church,

Clinton (Ukulele Band)

For info call Gail: 601-924-9912

NORTHERN

Thursday, September 2

FBC, Starkville

Golden Triangle Association Senior Choir

For info call: 662-323-5633

DON'T MISS THIS!

June 11 deadline!



GA Mother/Daughter Overnight Camp Garaywa – June 25-26

Cost: \$35 per person

Mother's and GA daughters, 1-6 grades

Friday, 5 p.m. - Saturday, 2 p.m.

To register:

Check with your GA director for registration form or call the WMU office: 1-800-748-1651 (ext. 316) or locally, 292-3316.

Pray this day for...

June 4-17, 2004

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1 (800) 787-7729 (PRAY)

"From the soft voice of a child's first prayer to the whispered prayer of an aged Christian's last breath, prayer is the greatest privilege of life and is the greatest source of power on earth."

- "Prayer and Kingdom Advance" by T. W. Hunt and Bud Fray

The Sukuma Team in Tanzania asks: Please pray for the construction of churches in villages. Many churches meet in schools, and the government is no longer allowing that. Please pray the people in the villages will work together to build their own churches.

For: (1) WMU, SBC Annual Meeting Indianapolis, Ind., 2 p.m., 13th-9 p.m., 1st (WMU); (2) Please pray today for President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana (western Africa, between Cote d'Ivoire and Togo).

For: (1) Sunday School Directors' Workshop, 38th Ave. BC, Hattiesburg, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (SS); (2) Team Camp for Girls Basketball, 7th-9th, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko (MM); (3) GA Camp 7th-11th, Camp Garaywa, Clinton (WMU).

For: (1) Children's Mission Camp, 14th-16th, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko (MM); (2) GA Camp, 14th-18th, Camp Garaywa, Clinton (WMU); (3) Youth Conference, 14th-18th, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian (MBCB); (4) All-State Youth Choir & Orchestra Rehearsal Camp & Tour, William Carey College, Hattiesburg, 9 a.m., 14th-9 p.m., 22nd (CM).

For: (1) Sunday School Director Workshop, Belden BC, Tupelo, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (SS); (2) IV Youth Conference, 8th-12th, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian (MBCB); (3) Pray for God to prepare those who will be reaching out to children, youth, and university students this summer in Indonesia.

For: (1) Southern Baptist Convention 15th-16th, Indianapolis, Ind.; (2) Missionaries Woody and Sylvia Fletcher write: "The need for faithfulness and perseverance is ongoing for Peruvian church planters working among the marginal urban population of Lima. Pray that Satan will not have access to discourage these men and women and pray that they will continue to be bold witnesses for Christ."

For: (1) Baptist Building Staff AT HOME DAYS, 9th-11th; (2) Team Camp for Boys Basketball, 9th-11th, Central Hills Baptist Retreat, Kosciusko (MM); (3) A, 70 plus, lives alone in Buenos Aires, and says that he accepted Jesus. Pray as he begins basic discipleship with a member of the Metro Team of Buenos Aires.

On March 29, Bulgaria officially became a member of NATO. Many Bulgarians are putting much hope in this development. But the answer to all of these hopes is not to be found in NATO or the European Union. The only true answer in which we can put all of our faith and hope is Jesus. Pray that the people of Bulgaria will come to understand this truth.

Muslim fundamentalists are moving into the current power vacuum and are demanding an Islamic state. Pray that God will establish His government and that it will be conducive to the movement of the Gospel into Iraq. Pray that God will direct the hearts of those in authority.

There are millions of Maninka people that need to hear the message of Christ in West Africa. Pray for those missionaries that live among them to have God's wisdom as they balance cultural sensitivity with boldness. Pray that they will be empowered by the Spirit to give a testimony at each and every opportunity that comes their way.

For: (1) III Youth Conference, 4th-8th, Gulfshore Baptist Assembly, Pass Christian (MBCB); (2) Andy Haynes, Providence, R.I. is coordinator of collegiate ministries for the Southeastern New England Association. Pray for workers to witness among the students on more than 20 college and university campuses.

Monty and Janis Thompson, missionaries in Brazil, were thrilled to have 500 people come to a showing of the "Jesus" film near a new church start. At Easter, 15 visitors showed up for church, most saying they did so because of the film. Thank God for the 31 decisions made in March and April.

Continue in prayer for those who are dealing with serious health problems in Brazil. Remember also missionaries and MKs who are expecting babies in the next few weeks. Ask that they might have healthy pregnancies and safe deliveries.

Rick Shepherd, Jacksonville, Fla., is the director of the prayer and spiritual awakening department of the Florida Baptist Convention. Pray for creativity and wisdom in encouraging and equipping churches and leaders in prayer ministries to help fulfill the Great Commission.



AUGUST

Young Musicians Camp

Blue Mountain College
July 26-30, 2004

Clinician - Don Odom
Pastor - James Lewis

Worship Leader - David Prevost
Accompanist - Wendy South

Theme: "Praising Him: Yesterday,
Today and Forever."

Music: "Special Praise for Special
Days" by Dennis and Nan Allen
Cost \$110

To make reservations, please contact the
Church Music Department at 1-800-748-1651
or 601-292-3271 in Jackson.

8-6-83
MISS AUDRA C. FUNDERBURK
Parents: Rickey and Lori
West Africa: Administrative Associate

8-11-97
MISS VALERIA B. HOLLEY
Parents: Marty and Shari
Eastern South America: General Evangelism

8-20-03
MR. HEZEKIAH LOGAN
Parents: Chadwick and Keyes
Western Europe: Mission Support

8-24-01
MISS KAYLEE E. HODGINS
Parents: Raymond and Cynthia
Eastern South America: Sports Evangelism

8-27-00
MR. BENTON E. HEWITT, III
Parents: Earl and Ramona
West Africa: Medicine

8-28-86
MR. ROSS E. FUNDERBURK
Parents: Rickey and Lori
West Africa: Administrative Associate

Take a moment to send a
card to encourage the
children of our
missionaries!

PLEASE NOTE
Church members may
send a package of
cards together; cards
do not have to be sent
individually to
Stewardship.

For security, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to:
Child's name and parent's name, MBCB Stewardship Dept.
PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

HOUSE TOPS

HOMEcomings & REVIVALS

Providence, Tippah County: 150th Anniversary June 13; service, 10:30 a.m.; potluck meal, noon; singing, 1 p.m.; Armond Taylor, former pastor, preaching; The Servants, Ripley, singing; the youth will bury a time capsule; Tommy Wilder, pastor; all are welcome.

Coldwater, Philadelphia: Homecoming June 13; beginning at 10:30 a.m.; a potluck dinner will follow; Chester Estes, former pastor, speaker; Buck Stovall, music.

Leaf River, Smith County: 155th Homecoming June 13; worship, 11 a.m.; Tam Maddox, guest speaker.

Center Hill, Hamilton: Homecoming June 6; Sunday

School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served at noon; singing featuring The Messengers, 1 p.m.; Ronnie Mitchell, former pastor, preaching; all are welcome; Terry J. Edwards, pastor.

Faith, Lawrence County: Revival June 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:15 p.m.; lunch at noon; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gene Douglas, speaker; Hubert Greer, music.

Mt. Olivet, Scott County: Revival June 13-16; Sunday, lunch at 11 a.m., worship at 11:45 a.m.; 7 p.m. nightly; Marshall Lum, evangelist; Glenn Hayman, pastor.

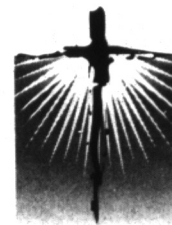
Coila, Coila: Homecoming and Revival June 6-11;

Sunday, 11 a.m., lunch will follow; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m. nightly; Melvin Mordecai, Millport, Ala., guest preacher; Promised Quartet, music; Billy Blakely, pastor.

First, Bude: Revival June 6-9; 7 p.m. nightly; Bill Wright, First, Purvis, evangelist; Jerry Williams, EPIC ministries, Houston, Texas, music evangelist; for more information, call (601) 384-2326.

Indian Springs, Perry County: Homecoming June 6; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; a covered dish lunch will be served; The Gospel 5 will follow in the afternoon; Doug Rouse, former pastor, preaching; Brad Howard, pastor.

Philadelphia, Caseyville: Homecoming June 13; Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.; worship, 10:45 a.m.; lunch will follow; Rick Cook, guest speaker.

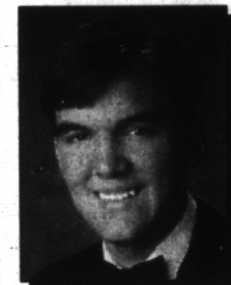


MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

www.mbc.org

Staff Changes

Evan Akins has been called as youth director to Tangipahoa Church, Summit. Troy Mercer is pastor.



Akins

Calvary Church, Yazoo City, welcomes Anthony Miller as pastor. He previously served as pastor of Eastside Church, Belzoni.

Harrisville Church, Harrisville, has called MeShay Franklin as interim youth minister effective May 23. Ron Burch is pastor.

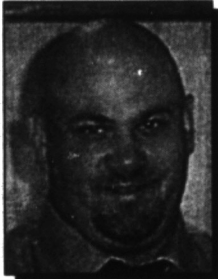
JUST FOR THE RECORD

Gatesville Church, Crystal Springs, ordained Eddie Chambless as a deacon May 23. Matt Armstrong is pastor.

Ethel Church, Ethel, licensed Michael Caswell Johnson to the ministry March 28.

Leaf River Church, Smith County, will hold the 47th Annual Meeting of the Pineville-Leaf River Cemetery Association

June 13 at 2 p.m. All those interested are invited to attend.



Chambless

Antioch Church, Columbus, will hold VBS June 7-11 from 9 a.m.-noon for 4 year olds-6th graders. The theme is Jesus' Circle of Friends. For more information, call (662) 328-4765 or (662) 328-4767.

Unity Church, east of Georgetown, will present the Imperials in concert June

5 at 6 p.m. A meal will follow. All are invited.

VBS will be held June 21-25 at Holly Church, Corinth, nightly at 6 p.m. for children preschool through grade 6. Grades 7-12 will have a campout and Backyard Bible Club June 11-13 at the Piney Grove Recreational Area.

New Hope Church, Foxworth, will have a block party June 5 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at the ballfield to kickoff VBS. VBS will be held June 7-11 from 8:30-11:30 a.m. for ages 2 years through 6th grade. Youth VBS will be held June 7-10 beginning at 6 p.m.

Union South Church, Seminary, will have a reception honoring Lamar and Retha Williams June 13 from 2-4 p.m. All are invited.

VBS will be held at Bellevue Church, Pontotoc County, June 14-18 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for kindergarten through 6th grade.



Harrison

Emmanuel Church, Union, recently ordained Chris Harrison. Bill Hall is pastor. Ronny Spivey, former pastor, participated. Harrison is now pastor as New Ireland Church, Newton County.

Harrisville Church, Harrisville, will hold VBS June 14-18 from 8:30-11:45 a.m. with a VBS Play and Family Night June 18 at 7 p.m. For more information, call (601) 847-1593.

VBS God's All-Star Champions will be held at Indian Springs Church, Perry County, June 14-18 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. The Commencement Service will be held June 19 at 6:30 p.m. Allyson Howard is director and Brad Howard is pastor.

Mississippi

LEADS THE NATION IN HEART DISEASE.

More than 50% of Mississippi deaths related to heart disease occur in women.

For many women, a first heart attack is fatal because symptoms and risk factors went without attention.

More frighteningly, only 8% of women even realize that heart disease is a significant health risk to women.

Call 1-800-948-6262 or 948-6262 for your \$25 Heart Screening.

Baptist
WOMEN'S HEART
www.mbhs.org



LifeWay Church Buses

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www.carpenterbus.com

1119 Mississippi Churches Can't Be Wrong.

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For references and more information, call Mike Brooks at 601-420-0174 or 1-800-442-0290.



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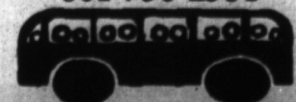
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RiteWay Bus Sales

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Baptism

Acts 2:36-41; Romans 6:1-10

By Mo Baker

What identifies you as belonging to your family? Is it a particular physical characteristic, a certain behavior you exhibit, or simply that you share their surname and live at the same address as they do? Obviously there are many things that can link us with our closest family members.

Similarly, Christians can be identified as belonging to God's family through the act of baptism. Christian baptism has been practiced throughout church history since Jesus commanded the disciples to do so in Matthew 28:19. Early Christians understood that to be baptized "in the name" (Mt. 28:19) of Christ meant to be affiliated with Him. While the Bible does not teach that baptism saves a person, it does provide instruction as to baptism's importance for believers.

I. A SYMBOL OF OBEDIENCE (ACTS 2:36-41)

Upon hearing Peter's Pentecost sermon, people in the vast crowd began to wonder about how to respond. Luke indicates that they were under conviction for their mistreatment of Jesus, as he states that they were "cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37). Peter answered that they needed to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38). The phrase, "for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38) does not need to be troublesome. The verse literally reads, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for, (or on the basis of, or because of) the forgiveness of your sins" (Polhill 1992, 117). Understood contextually, Luke's phrase here indicates that the forgiveness of sins is the reason for believers' baptism because it links one with the community of faith in God. For believers today, as



Baker

in the first century, baptism's value as an outward act lies in its symbolism of repentance, faith, and obedience to Jesus Christ. Hence, baptism is neither outdated nor obsolete. To be an unbaptized Christian would have been a foreign concept to the New Testament writers.

II. A SYMBOL OF DEATH (ROMANS 6:1-4A)

Not only does baptism serve as a symbol of obedience to Christ, but it also represents death with Christ. The notion that believers had died to sin was an important one in Paul's theology. Without being dead to sin, believers could argue for sin to increase in their lives, so that they may experience more of God's grace. Paul's stern answer to his own rhetorical question regarding sinful living emphasizes the character of the Christian. The phrase, "We died to sin" indicates quality and means persons of a particular kind of relationship or character (Murray 1968, 213). In the present case, Paul's

reference was to believers and their relationship to sin.

Everyone knows the pain that death produces as it separates our loved ones from us. Correspondingly, death to sin removes the believer from sin's control and power in his life. Although sin may still attempt to dominate believers' lives, genuine believers have been spiritually baptized into Christ's death, thereby rendering believers dead to sin. Jesus died for sin so that we could die to sin. Water baptism symbolizes physically what has already taken place spiritually, that the sinful life is dead and has been buried with Christ. Just as burial confirms the reality of physical death, baptism is meant to show a death to sin.

III. A SYMBOL OF LIFE (ROMANS 6:4B-10)

In addition to serving as a symbol of obedience to Christ and death to sin, baptism further portrays renewed spiritual life for believers. Thankfully, no baptismal candidate has ever been allowed to remain under the water permanently! Arising out of the baptismal pool not only prolongs

their health, but it is also a visible affirmation that God's glorious power has raised believers to a new way of living. To be alive is a stark contrast to being dead. Moreover, the new life believers are free to live in Christ is to be different from their old lives. Christ empowers believers to share in his life because they have shared in his death. Paul's verb tense in verse 6 — "might be done away with" — refers to absolute impotence and inaction (Sanday and Headlam 1902, 158). Now that the old self is powerless, believers no longer have to remain in slavery to sin. Furthermore, believers can be certain of their own eternal life because of the eternal life of Christ.

Baptism's importance as a symbol of the Christian faith cannot be overlooked in today's generation. It's representation of obedience to Christ, death to sin, and life in Jesus Christ is significant for believers in any cultural setting. Baptism portrays that believers now enjoy a new identity in Christ.

Baker is BSU Director of the University of Mississippi in Oxford.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Pass the Torch

2 Kings 2:1-3, 7-14

By Mary Carraway

Studying the Old Testament is always exciting to me, for as I have told my Sunday School class countless times: If we don't understand the Old Testament, then we really can't understand the New Testament (Luke 24:27).

First and 2 Kings, originally one book, were first divided in the third century B.C. with the translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek, the Septuagint. We have no definite statement of authorship, though it is generally agreed to be the work of prophets, since this is a prophetic interpretation of the history of Israel from the reign of Solomon to the Babylonian Captivity. It shows how Israel's disobedience to God led first to the division of the kingdom into Israel in the north and Judah in

the south and ultimately to the fall of the United Kingdom and the destruction of Jerusalem. These books were not written merely to record history, but more importantly to teach the lessons of history.

Second Kings begins at the end of the reign of King Ahaziah in Samaria who suffers an unfortunate accident. He is rebuked by the prophet Elijah for sending messengers to consult Baal-Zebub for help instead of the Lord God of Israel and true to Elijah's warning, the king dies.

This is the last work of Elijah, the great prophet of the Northern Kingdom, before his miraculous translation into heaven. His work, however great, would have remained incomplete without someone to continue it. Elijah's successor was Elisha. Elisha was plow-



Carraway

ing one day when Elijah passed by. In obedience to God's command, he threw his cloak upon Elisha symbolically bestowing his prophetic powers on him and adopting him as a spiritual son. Elisha must have immediately understood the significance of this act, for he delayed only long enough to kiss his parents good-bye and give a farewell feast for his people before following Elijah (1 Kings 19:16-19).

I KINGS 2:1-3

It is probably ten years later when we see Elisha again on the last day of Elijah's earthly life. There must have been a mixture of sorrow and joy as Elijah and Elisha visited Gilgal, Bethel, and Jericho offering encouragement to the prophets in these towns, for it is apparent that Elijah is about to leave them. It is perhaps surprising that at each stop Elijah tells Elisha to stay behind, but Elijah knows from experience that the role of prophet to Israel was not an enviable one. He is testing

the commitment and determination of his protégé, and he is not disappointed. Elisha refuses to leave his spiritual father.

I KINGS 2:7-10

What a momentous day! For Elijah, his translation into the very presence of the living God; for Elisha, his inauguration as the successor of this mighty prophet; and for Israel, the significant transition of spiritual leadership.

From a distance fifty men watch as Elijah parts the waters of the Jordan with his cloak. Elisha's last request of Elijah is for a "double portion of spirit." A "double portion" was the inheritance of the first born (Deut. 21:17). He is not asking for a material inheritance or for greater powers than Elijah, but for the unique privilege of following Elijah in his prophetic ministry. The gift Elisha sought was the spirit of vision and insight, the ability to see beyond the temporal world to the invisible and eternal, the spiritual perception necessary for effective service in God's kingdom. This is not Elijah's gift to give. That is why it is "a difficult thing."

Elisha will know God has granted his request if he sees Elijah's supernatural transport into heaven. He must see not only with his eyes but also with his heart and his spirit.

I KINGS 2:11-14

Suddenly a chariot and horses of fire appear, and Elisha watches as Elijah is taken up in a whirlwind. Horses and chariots, the mightiest means of warfare in that day, symbolized God's power. Elisha cries out as he realizes that a true prophet of God is a nation's surest defense and protection.

Tearing off his clothes, Elisha picks up the fallen cloak of Elijah, the symbol of authority with which God had clothed and empowered him. Elisha assumes both the mantle and the mission of Elijah. As confirmation of the passing of the torch, he repeats Elijah's miracle at the Jordan River.

"Where now is the Lord, the God of Elijah?" He is with Elisha!

Carraway is member of First Church, Wiggins.

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THE BAPTIST
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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

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Executive Director

Sunday, June 6, 2004
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MLOT CR SDLV MUAHUM

RNUVUBDVU RD XDY.

VUMCMR RNU YUHCA,

WKY NU JCAA BAUU

BVDT SDL.

FWTUM BDLV: MUHUK

Clue: S = Y

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Ephesians 3:6

Pro-family groups plead for involvement

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (BP and local reports) — Saying that the future of America is at stake, pro-family leaders May 23 called on Christians to get involved in the debate over same-sex marriage by pushing for the passage of the Federal Marriage Amendment.

"I am not exaggerating when I say the next 12 to 18 months will likely determine not only the future of this country but of Western civilization," said Family Research Council President Tony Perkins, who is no relation to William Perkins, editor of The Baptist Record.

Perkins and other pro-family leaders spoke to several hundred churches via satellite and the Internet at an event titled the Battle for Marriage. The simulcast took place a mere six days after Massachusetts became the first state to legalize same-sex marriage.

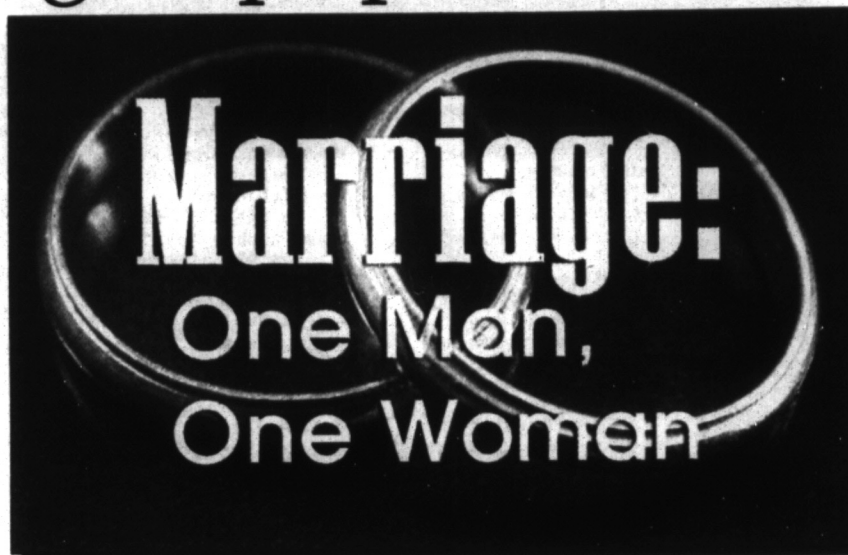
"This is such a critical moment," Focus on the Family founder James Dobson said. "We do stand at a crossroads." Dobson said events of recent weeks — including the fact that Congress seems indifferent to the issue — have made him "discouraged."

"It just seems like ... a mountain too high to climb," Dobson said, "and I have been chastised by the Lord for that [attitude]. He is still on the throne."

Holding an oversized gavel to represent judges who have a "super-sized view of their authority," Perkins said federal judges have not been kind to traditional family values. "They've taken away the right of our children to pray," he said. "They've taken the Ten Commandments and they've put them in the closet."

Adding that the federal courts have stymied a partial-birth abortion ban, Perkins said it's only a matter of time before a same-sex marriage case ends up before federal judges.

"[T]hey're going to impose upon all of us same-sex marriages all across this country," Perkins said. "...If we do not enact a constitutional amendment, one of these days in the very near future one of these tyrannical judges is going to drop



the gavel and it's going to be the end of marriage in America."

The only solution, Perkins said, is to pass a constitutional marriage amendment. "We must amend the U.S. Constitution so that it defines marriage as being between one man and one woman," he said.

Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, said members of Congress have indicated they have received very little response from voters regarding a constitutional marriage amendment. "This is the mother of all culture war battles," he said. "This is the one that decides what kind of a country we're going to be."

Believers, Colson said, must place a phone call to their legislators. Traditional mail and e-mails are less influential, he added. The anthrax scare has resulted in traditional mail taking two weeks to reach a legislator's office. E-mails, he said, can be deleted. Phone calls — to both a senator's Washington office and the home office — can make a difference.

"Explain it reasonably and calmly and lovingly," Colson said. "...At the end of the day they'll ...say, 'I couldn't get off the phone today. So many people are calling in on this issue.'"

Dobson said it's critical that believers be able to defend their position. One of the biggest objections comes from those who shrug their shoulders and say, "Who's [same-sex marriage] going to hurt?"

"That's a selfish question," Dobson said. "The question [should be,] 'What does it do to the country and what does it do to children?'" Traditional marriage, Dobson said, cannot "co-exist with homosexual marriage. It will destroy the family."

Scandinavian countries began granting same-sex couples the legal benefits of marriage during the 1990s, Dobson said, and the results have been disastrous. People there have forgotten the purpose of marriage, he said. "People are not marrying," Dobson said. "They are cohabiting. That's what will happen. It is an inevitable result."

Other negative results will follow if America embraces same-sex marriage, he said. Schools will be forced to teach that homosexuality and heterosexuality are equal. In addition, religious freedom will be in danger.

Believers are mobilizing, he said. Dobson mentioned pro-family rallies that have seen thousands turn out to stand for traditional marriage. In Seattle,

he said, 20,000 turned out. Rallies in San Francisco (8,000), San Jose (2,000) and Phoenix (8,000) also saw great turnouts, he said.

Dobson has a new book on the issue, titled, Marriage Under Fire: Why We Must Win This Battle. "I am excited," Dobson said. "Why? Because... I see a rumbling from coast to coast. It hasn't reached Washington, D.C., yet but it's going to."

Legislators in Washington, though, are running from the issue, Dobson said. He said that when he was in Washington recently, several senators refused to meet with him and other pro-family leaders. "They don't want to get near to us, because they're scared of this issue," he said. "But you all have to convince them that there's something else to be scared of."

Only 30 senators have agreed to sign the Federal Marriage Amendment, Dobson said. It will require 67 votes to pass the Senate. "You won't believe who's among the 70 [that aren't supporting it]," he said.

Colson said biblical arguments won't always work with non-believers and politicians. He told of a television debate he watched that involved a Christian leader and a homosexual activist. The Christian leader made biblical arguments, but the homosexual retorted, "We're not asking for marriage in the church; we're asking for civil marriage." The Christian leader had no response, Colson said.

"You have to argue on grounds of justice and prudence," he said.

One of the best arguments, Colson said, is that children are better off with mothers and fathers. "You can't have that with just two [homosexual] adults," he said. "You can't model the proper sexual relationship between a husband and wife."

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